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ABSTRACT

The first 3 of the 11 publications reviewed in this annotated bibliography discuss both the benefits of school-based management (SBM) to educational quality and the appropriate degree of school district involvement in developing educational objectives, providing training for school management teams, and monitoring school-site leadership. Subsequent reports include: a study of the impact of SBM on accountability, flexibility, and efficiency; a review of four elements that are necessary for the school to become the primary decisionmaking unit; and a report that advocates evaluation of both the benefits and the potential problems of SBM before implementation. The remaining documents suggest that the district office should facilitate rather than dictate SBM, discuss the composition of SBM decisionmaking councils, encourage central office aid in decentralization by briefly and generally stating policy, explore the possibility of the school as the focal point for all endeavors without possessing complete authority, and investigate the SBM budgeting development and success. (KM)

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Number 97, December 1988

The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

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ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
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School-Based Management

1 ***American Association of School Administrators, National Association of Elementary School Principals, and National Association of Secondary School Principals.*** *School-Based Management: A Strategy for Better Learning.* Arlington, Virginia: AASA; Alexandria, Virginia: NAESP; and Reston, Virginia: NASSP, 1988. 22 pages. ED number not yet assigned.

A task force of educational administrators who have experience in school-based management (SBM) developed the recommendations in this report. According to the task force, SBM accomplishes two goals: to more effectively meet the needs of all children and to involve teachers, parents, and other community members in decisions that affect the schools. In a district that uses SBM, some decisions (such as "selecting supplemental instructional materials") are made at the local school level, whereas other decisions (such as "developing educational objectives for students at each grade level") are still made at the district level.

The principal plays a pivotal role in SBM because of the increased authority and responsibility for decisions at the school site. Teachers, too, "are empowered through shared decision making and they are enabled because the decisions are more likely to support what they are trying to accomplish in the classroom." Before implementing SBM, the school board and superintendent must solidly support SBM. Pilot tests may be appropriate in some districts. The staff must receive training in decision-making and consensus building. New budgeting practices, in which each school determines how best to allocate the available resources, must be established.

Potential obstacles to SBM must also be taken into account. Some states may have "micro-managed" the schools, leaving too little room for flexibility. Some collective bargaining agreements may require changes. There may be skepticism by some staff members. Some people may believe that equity is synonymous with uniformity and thus oppose any differences between schools.

2 **Association of California School Administrators.** *Return to Greatness: Strategies for Powerful Improvements in Our Schools.* Recommendations from the Commission on Public School Administration and Leadership. Sacramento, CA: ACSA, October 1988. ED number not yet assigned.

School-based management is one of several reforms that would improve public school administration in California, this commission says.

Along with encouraging school-site leadership in decision-making, the school board and superintendent must provide a clear and unifying vision for the district. The central office would support implementation of this vision at the school site and provide "specific direction to those schools that have difficulty translating the vision into high-quality programs."

To meet the district's vision, the local schools would establish instructional approaches and strategies "based on a premiere understanding and knowledge of the students and the community that make up the local school." The local school would have "responsibility for hiring, evaluation, resource allocation, and program development." The commission says that "the superintendent and principals should explicitly agree on the site's budget, personnel, and instructional decision-making latitude and the standards against which the local site will be held accountable."

"Administrators, teachers, and parents [would] work together to set goals for students at the school site." Most decision-making should be shared in a collegial manner, though the principal could retain the authority to make decisions in some areas. Administrators and teachers must be able to work together; "teachers must accept principals as important members of their instructional team."

3 **Beers, Donald E.** "School Based Management." Paper presented at national convention of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, New Orleans, April 12-16, 1984. 19 pages. ED 249 641.

Since schools today are big business, they can also implement participatory management models like those seen in Japanese and American industry. With school-based management (SBM), participation by every person in the organization is seen as positive. Although participatory decision-making "sometimes creates frustration and is often slower than more autocratic" methods, it "creates ownership and therefore leads to a more positive attitude towards the organization."

Pilot programs were started in twenty schools in the Charleston County School District (South Carolina). Each school has a local school management team made up of the principal, teachers, parents, and community members. The teams develop short- and long-range plans that include "needs assessment, goal identification, strategy development, program implementation, and evaluation."

To help principals and the school management teams with their new responsibilities, the district provides training sessions. In addition, each school receives a business partner who provides the

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team with information on such things as problem-solving techniques and needs assessment. The school management team also receives a liaison person from the district office who helps facilitate program development.

4 **Brown, Daniel J.** "A Preliminary Inquiry into School-Based Management." Report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, March 1987. 39 pages. ED 284 331.

After discussing theoretical perspectives, including types of decentralization, Brown describes his research into the impact of school-based management on accountability, flexibility, and efficiency. Two school districts in Canada were studied: Edmonton Public Schools and School District No. 35 in Langley. The schools in both districts have control over personnel, equipment, maintenance, and supplies.

In each school, budget planning continues most of the year. In January, priorities are set for the next school year; in March, a draft budget is developed; and in September, the budget is finalized after the actual enrollment at the school is known. These budgets are subject to board approval. To track spending, the district office sends a monthly status report to each school.

With school-based management, "school personnel believe that their roles accord them a fair measure of flexibility of decisionmaking on matters which are important to them."

Schools are more accountable under school-based management. The principals enjoy more authority but they need office automation systems to help with the added workload and technical aspects of their job. Although teachers preferred "self control to central control," not all are interested in the budget process or want to give time to it. To gauge the performance of the schools, Edmonton distributes questionnaires to random samples of parents, students, and staff.

Brown could not obtain enough data on learning outcomes or costs to determine the effect on efficiency. He did discern, however, a greater sense of satisfaction with education. Greater flexibility suggests that resources can be put to more effective use. On the other hand, time spent on the planning process could be used for teaching. Whereas a centralized system tends to inhibit creativity, school-based management "provides a structure in which schools might or might not innovate."

5 **Guthrie, James W.** "School-Based Management: The Next Needed Education Reform." *Phi Delta Kappan* 68, 4 (December 1986): 305-9. EJ 345 283.

Guthrie outlines four elements that are necessary for the school to become the primary decision-making unit. These elements are "principals who function as chief executive officers," school advisory councils, school-site budgeting and accounting, and "annual planning and performance reports."

The principal is held responsible for the effectiveness of the school and selects the teachers assigned to the school. The principal's salary must reflect his or her worth; "no one in the central office should receive a higher salary than the principals." This change in the salary structure, and a similar change in the salary structure for outstanding teachers, rewards principals and teachers for what they do best; this is in contrast to centralized systems where staff must be promoted to the central office to receive higher salaries.

Each school can have one or two school advisory councils made up of the parents of current students and faculty. The parents on the council must be elected so they "are representative of the parents served by each school." The council advises "the principal on such matters as disciplinary policies, program planning, hiring new faculty members, and allocation of school resources" and may coordinate specialized programs. Since the principal is the one who is accountable, the council is only advisory; it may help evaluate the principal, however.

Each school is allotted funds for a certain number of instruction units (to cover teacher salaries) and additional money depending on the student enrollment. Principals have discretion over how these funds are spent, with input from the school advisory council. To encourage improved performance, funds can be carried over to the next year.

Under the direction of the principal, the school produces and distributes an annual performance and planning report that explains "how well the school is meeting its goals, how it deploys its resources, and what plans it has for the future." Data gathered for this report can be used to evaluate the school. In states having a state-administered performance assessment system, such data would enable the state to prevent individual schools from letting standards slide.

6 **Honeyman, David S., and Rich Jensen.** "School-Site Budgeting." *School Business Affairs* 54, 2 (February 1988): 12-14. EJ 365 996.

Taking a cautious stance toward school-based management, Honeyman and Jensen encourage each school district to evaluate both the benefits and the potential problems of SBM before implementing a school-site budgeting plan.

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Centralized budgeting, where the superintendent has responsibility for developing the budget and presenting it to the school board for approval, was considered the best method during times of growth. Now that many districts face declining enrollments and reductions in funding, some districts see school-site budgeting as a way "to achieve increased public support for the financial dealings of the school" since this is the "level where parents have the closest ties." The principal and/or a committee determines how the funds are distributed among such things as personnel, supplies, and equipment at that school.

Honeyman and Jensen evaluate three commonly held assumptions about decentralization. Assumption 1: "Great improvement in educational productivity will result by providing more parent, student, teacher and principal control." The authors point out, however, that educational productivity is not improved if these groups battle over control of the budget.

Assumption 2: "There is a surplus of building-level experts and experience just waiting to be utilized." The principal, however, may not have received training in financial matters. And if he or she is going to manage the school's budget, less time will be available for other aspects of the job: curriculum, evaluation, discipline, and leadership. Teachers also need to have the commitment to put in extra time and planning to make the process work.

Assumption 3: "The building level provides a perfect setting in which parent, teacher and principal can work toward structuring the local building budget without digressing from the instructional needs of the students." The authors warn, however, that these groups must not use this time to air their complaints or champion their individual causes.

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7 **Lindelow, John, and James Heynderickx**. "School-Based Management." In *School Leadership: Handbook for Excellence*, 2nd ed., edited by Stuart C. Smith and Philip K. Piele. Eugene, Oregon: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, forthcoming.

Lindelow and Heynderickx state the rationale for school-based management; explain how it affects the roles of the school board, central office, and principals; present case studies of the use of school-based management in seven school districts; and examine how three critical areas—the curriculum, personnel, and the budget—are handled in a SBM system.

A cardinal principle of school-based management is that the district office should facilitate and not dictate. It should "stress the academic and budgetary goals without inhibiting the creative ideas and plans of those closest to the students." The district allocates funds to the schools, purchases materials specified by the schools, maintains information on job applicants, and provides standards for the curriculum. The amount of control over the curriculum varies; some districts provide a curriculum in each subject area that specifies goals, includes teaching plans, and identifies recommended materials. All districts evaluate the academic standards of individual schools, using such things as test scores and surveys of parents, teachers, and students.

The school develops the budget, hires teachers and other staff, and prepares the curriculum. The principal becomes the "total education leader." In the districts described in the case studies, principals were elevated to top management and were given the final choice of who worked in their schools. In some districts, the principals were given additional training in team management and decision-making skills in order to meet their new responsibilities.

Most schools have an advisory committee of parents, teachers, students (at the secondary level), and nonparent citizens. The committee helps the principal develop school policy, including budget decisions. Some schools also have a principal-teacher team that is involved in new teacher selection.

Funds are allocated by the district in a lump sum to the individual schools based on a formula. The budget is prepared at each school, with input from the advisory committee.

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8 **Marburger, Carl L**. *One School at a Time—School-Based Management: A Process for Change*. Columbia, Maryland: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1985. 84 pages. ED 263 683.

School-based management, Marburger says, is "a *trust* process" in which all parties involved in the local school participate in making decisions that affect the school.

Decisions are made by SBM councils made up of the principal, teachers, and parents. In addition, other community representatives, students, and support staff representatives may be included. The "SBM councils are not little school boards," but they determine how their school implements board policies. It is important to have a memorandum of agreement that specifies the roles and responsibilities of the council as well as the superintendent, the school board, and the principal. This prevents misunderstandings when personnel change. It is also important that council members receive training in group dynamics and human relations.

The council should first "decide whether majority voting, unanimity, or consensus will be the basis for making decisions." Next, they should conduct a needs assessment by distributing a questionnaire to teachers, administrators, community members, and students. Then the council can develop a plan of action that contains goals and measurable objectives.

Especially during the first year of SBM, additional time and energy are required of the principal. And, although decisions are made cooperatively by the council and the principal (as one member of the council), "the principal will still be held responsible for the decisions that are made." Moreover, Marburger says that "it is quite legitimate for a principal to hold to him/herself some particular decisions" such as the assignment of teachers to the school, if the principal clarifies in advance what decisions will be his or her sole responsibility.

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9 **Prasch, John C**. "Reversing the Trend Toward Centralization." *Educational Leadership* 42, 2 (October 1984): 27-29. EJ 308 271.

To encourage decentralization of the schools, the central office must state policy in brief, general terms rather than have large, detailed policy and procedure manuals. Prasch includes six sample policy statements.

For example, one policy statement can make it clear that the principal is in charge: "principals have control and responsibility for the buildings and grounds, for all supplies and equipment housed at the building, for all school-related activities carried on there, and for all pupils, teachers, and other employees assigned to the building." The central office may be responsible for purchasing, warehousing, and distribution of supplies, but the decision about what supplies to order is made at the school level. Each school is given funds to be used for equipment and supplies; the use of these funds is determined at the school level and any excess can be carried over to the next year.

Each school can be assigned a certain number of staffing points that reflects the number and types of students enrolled at the school. The number of mentally handicapped, disadvantaged, and academically gifted students as well as the number of students requiring special reading assistance increases the number of staffing points. "Staff selection is made from another table of points that puts a value on each category of staff member roughly related to the average salary for workers in that category." The central office is responsible for maintaining the list of candidates and for

their initial screening. However, it is up to the principals to recommend whom to hire for vacant staff positions.

The central office "will have a recommended rather than required course of study and will establish procedures by which a school can legitimately use other materials." The curriculum developed by the central office can be expressed in terms of goals, objectives, and expected outcomes. It is then up to the school to best determine the method of producing the desired results.

10 **Rennie, Robert J.** "School Centered Management: A Matter of Style!" *School Business Affairs* 51, 4 (April 1985): 64-65, 67. EJ 316 762.

In the school-centered management (SCM) system described by Rennie, "authority is placed at that level in the organization where there is the highest degree of probability for successful decision-making." All authority does not belong at the school level, but "the school must be the central focal point of all management endeavors."

Although there have been many theories of management, the situational approach to management (popularized by Frederic E. Fielder) says that "'the best style of management is dependent on the needs of the organization'—the workers, the manager, and the dynamics of the situation." Because there are differences in the motivation of the staff and the demands of the situation, the manager must have the flexibility and ability to respond to the various educational situations.

Effective schools seem to have managers who can delegate, who have faith in the competence of others, who can obtain needed support, who can communicate well with school constituencies, and who can establish parental involvement and a positive school climate. SCM is an effort to achieve these desirable ends using a situational management style that is responsive to the needs of each building and community. It gives the manager the authority and independence needed to make decisions and take creative actions that are supported at the local level and result in the best programs of education for the school and the district. The delegation of authority also includes the equivalent delegation of accountability. "SCM is maintaining the proper balance of authority and accountability while focusing our energies on the school."

11 **Spear, JoAnn Palmer.** "School Site Budgeting/Management: The State of the Art." Paper presented at annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, April 11-15, 1983. 14 pages. ED 231 082.

With school site budgeting/management, the budget for each school is developed by the principal with input from teachers, parents, and community members. "Instructional and administrative priorities are expressed through resource allocation."

To determine what funds are available for each school, the central office (1) establishes the total systemwide revenue target; (2) determines the systemwide costs (such as transportation, utilities, maintenance, and central administration); (3) subtracts the amount in step 2 from that in step 1 to determine the total amount to be managed by the individual schools; and (4) distributes the amount in step 3 among the schools using a weighted pupil formula.

To investigate the success of school site budgeting/management, Spear interviewed officials in four school districts (two suburban and two urban districts). Although the districts varied in the amount of implementation, school site budgeting was viewed as successful. Budgeting is more realistic since "decisions are made closest to the student and that's what really sells it." The program took from one to six years to implement. Although principals are the key people, they had little or no training in school site budgeting prior to implementation and had to learn as the process developed. All districts found that teacher and parent participation in school decisions led to a closer relationship between parents and teachers. As Spear says, "Parent, teacher, and community involvement in decisionmaking results in greater support."

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College of Education
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403